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Researchers and educators have suggested over the past several years that beginning teacher induction and mentoring programs play a significant role in the development and retention of quality teaching professionals. Induction programs provide the critical support that beginning teachers need as they experience the "reality" of the classroom and the constraints of working in an established school climate. One state mentor training program, the Teacher Support Specialist (TSS) program, prepares experienced teachers to be mentors through coursework and fieldwork. A local university has adapted and expanded this training to provide for system level specialists who can redeliver training locally. Administrators are involved as team members and trained supporters of both the mentors and the novice teachers. (Contains 36 references.) (Author/SM)

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No Teacher Left Behind:

Mentoring and Supporting Novice Teachers

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Abstract

Researchers and educators have suggested over the past several years that beginning teacher induction and mentoring programs play a significant role in the development and in the retention of quality teaching professionals. Induction programs provide the critical support that beginning teachers need as they experience the "reality" of the classroom and the constraints of working in an established school climate.

One state mentor training program, the Teacher Support Specialist (TSS) program, prepares experienced teachers to be mentors through coursework and fieldwork. A local university has adapted and expanded this training to provide for system level specialists who can redeliver training locally. Administrators are involved as team members and trained supporters of both the mentors and the novice teachers.

NO TEACHER LEFT BEHIND:

MENTORING AND SUPPORTING NOVICE TEACHERS

Induction and Mentoring for New Teachers

A growing concern among educators and other stakeholders in the field of education has been the staffing of schools with qualified teachers, due in part to the requirement of *The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*, which stipulates that schools have a qualified teacher in every classroom. Many schools in the nation are currently being faced with an inadequate supply of qualified teachers because a generation of veteran teachers is approaching retirement age, lower percentages of people are choosing teaching as a career, and many younger teachers are choosing to leave the field of education (Colb, 2001). Accordingly, 10% of new teachers leave the profession within their first year, 20% leave within three years, and 30% of new teachers leave the profession within their first five years of teaching (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Furthermore, the most talented new educators are often the most likely to leave (Gonzales & Sosa, 1993). Thus, the focus of solving the problem of the number of available qualified teachers should be retaining the teachers who are already in the profession (Darling-Hammond, 2003).

In the state of Georgia, teacher attrition rates average approximately 9 teachers per day and 250 teachers per month. These rates, when combined with the concomitant pressures of a growing student population, increasingly stringent academic requirements, and the aforementioned factors affecting teacher supply and demand result in a projected shortfall of 7,000 teachers in Georgia (Bennett, 2003). The staffing situation is particularly acute in the rural areas of the state where teacher recruitment and retention are rendered especially problematic in districts that lack the resources found in more suburban settings.

Several factors have been identified as reasons for novice teachers leaving the profession within the early stages of their careers. Danielson (2002) reported beginning teachers are often given more challenging teaching assignments than their colleagues. Additionally, they are assigned multiple classes for which to prepare, are assigned the most challenging students, and may not have a room of their own (Danielson, 2002). According to Zimmerman and Stansbury (2000), the first few years of teaching are stressful to beginning teachers as they face the challenges of adapting to a new workplace and new colleagues, as they experience isolation in being sequestered in their individual classrooms, and have very little free time because of the need to meet all of their assigned responsibilities. In fact, 92% of new teachers do not seek help unless required to do so (Gray & Gray, 1985). According to Huling-Austin (1988), the teaching profession is one of the few, if not the only profession, in which beginners are expected to assume full responsibilities the first day on the job, and Halford (1998) purports that education has been dubbed "the profession that eats its young" (p. 33).

The following factors have also been identified as influencing teacher attrition rates: a) Teacher salaries - teachers earn 20% to 30% less than workers with the same amount of education and experience (National Commission on Teaching & America's Future [NCTAF], 1999); b) Working conditions – Teachers' feelings about administrative support, resources for teaching, and teacher input into decision making are strongly related to their decision to remain in the profession; c) Teacher preparation - teachers who lack adequate initial preparation are more likely to leave the profession; and d) Induction and mentoring support – a number of researchers have found that well-designed mentoring programs increase retention rates for new

teachers by improving their instructional skills, attitudes, and feelings of efficacy (Darling-Hammond, 2003).

In relation to attrition rates, researchers have identified the following most prevalent problems that beginning teachers encounter: disciple and classroom management, dealing with individual differences, relations with parents, assessing students' work, organization of class work, insufficient materials and supplies, (Veenman, 1984; Brock & Grady, 1997), motivating students (Veenman, 1984), lack of emotional support, planning and time management, communicating with students, other faculty members, and administrators, understanding the procedures and policies of the school, using effective teaching strategies (Brock & Grady, 1997), change in schedule, working in isolation, underestimation of the difficulties of teaching, no formal or inadequate orientation, no distinction between work requirements of beginners and veterans, limited opportunities for mutual exchange between beginners and veterans, and inadequate professional training in practical knowledge and skills (Deal & Chatman, 1989). Furthermore, Tetzlaff and Wagstaff (1999) suggested beginning teachers face critical events and turning points in their first year of teaching. For example, beginning teachers' developmental growth, attitudes, feelings, styles of teaching, expectations, and decisions to remain in teaching are influenced by the first year experience, reinforcing the fact that school districts need to be prepared to provide programs to support beginning teachers.

Early attrition from teaching bears enormous costs for schools and school districts. One finding from a study in the state of Texas was the annual state turnover rate of 15%, which includes a 40% turnover rate for public school teachers in their first 3 years, costs the state approximately $329 million a year which is calculated as $8,000 per recruit who leave in the first

few years of teaching (Texas Center for Education Research, 2000). Similarly, ASCD (2003) identified the cost to education systems of teachers leaving the profession as 20% of each leaving teacher's salary (ASCD, 2003). Furthermore, a large concentration of underprepared teachers can create a drain on a school district's human and financial resources. For example, inexperienced teachers are assigned almost exclusively to low-performing schools which means lowest-income students are least likely to have an experienced, fully-qualified teacher and suffer the most in their academic achievement levels (NCTAF, 2003). Hidden costs to school districts also exist. Two examples include the loss of enormous public investment that goes into tuition and tax support for preparing new teachers and the disruption of the coherence, continuity, and community that are central to effective schools (NCTAF, 2003).

Educators and researchers have suggested one way to support beginning teachers is through induction and mentoring programs in which experienced teachers provide support and guidance to novice teachers. According to the National Association of State Boards of Education (1998), well-designed mentoring programs lower the attrition rates of beginning teachers. For example, in a study of new teachers in New Jersey, Gold (1999) reported the first-year attrition rate of teachers trained in a traditional college program without mentoring was 18%, whereas the attrition rate of first-year teachers whose induction program included mentoring was 5%.

Providing induction and mentoring for beginning teachers has other benefits, as well. The benefits for teachers include larger and more sophisticated repertoires of teaching strategies (Schaffer, Stringfield, & Wolfe, 1992), stronger classroom management skills (Educational Resources Information Center, 1986), increased job satisfaction for both new and veteran teachers (Moir, 2001), ability to deal with behavior and discipline problems more effectively,

lower levels of stress, anxiety, and frustration for new teachers, and opportunities of veteran teachers to revisit and reflect on teaching practices and philosophy (Brewster & Railsback, 2001). Benefits for students and schools include higher student achievement and test scores (Ganser, Marchione, & Fleischmann, 1999; Geringer, 2000; Goodwin, 1999), higher quality teaching and increased teacher effectiveness (Goodwin, 1999; Schaffer, Stringfield, & Wolfe, 1992; Weiss & Weiss, 1999), stronger connections among the teaching staff leading to a more positive learning environment for students (Brewster & Railsback, 2001), and less time and money spent on recruiting and hiring replacements (Halford, 1998).

More recently, researchers have focused on the impact of teacher retention on student learning. Substantial research evidence suggests well-prepared capable teachers have the largest impact on student learning (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Wilson, Floden, & Ferrini-Mundy, 2001). According to the members of the American Association of School Administrators (2001), high school principals (70%) are convinced that teacher experience has an impact on student achievement. Similarly, teachers made available by reducing turnover would be experienced teachers, not novices, and research indicates teacher experience is important in student achievement (Darling-Hammond, 2000; Antonucci, 1999).

Fieman-Nemser (1996) suggested teacher mentoring programs be developed and enacted so guidelines can be established to help support curriculum issues, classroom management strategies, lesson plans, day-to-day school procedures and policies, and numerous other teaching responsibilities of new teachers. Danielson (1999) found mentoring programs help novice teachers face their new challenges through reflective activities and professional conversations,

helping these new teachers improve their teaching practices. Also, Danielson concluded that mentoring fosters professional development for both new teachers and their mentors.

Holloway (2001) suggested that the presence of a mentor is not enough; the mentor's knowledge of how to support new teachers and skill at providing guidance are crucial to the success of the new teacher. According to Holloway, to be effective, mentoring programs need focus and structure, and prospective mentors should participate in professional development activities to learn about the mentoring process and what is expected of them before assuming the role of mentor. Appropriate training for mentors improves the quality of a mentoring program. Accordingly, Evertson and Smithey (2000) found that beginning teachers who worked with trained mentors possessed a higher level of teaching skills than new teachers whose mentors were not trained.

To be effective, induction and mentoring programs must be well designed and well supported (Darling-Hammond, 2003). According to Wong (2003), elements of a successful induction program begin with an initial four to five days of training in areas such as classroom management and effective teaching techniques. Other elements are as follows: a) offer a continuum of professional development through systematic training over a period of 2-3 years; b) provide study groups in which new teachers can network, build support, etc. in a learning community; c) incorporate a strong sense of administrative support; d) integrate a supportive mentoring component; e) present structure for modeling effective teaching during in-services and mentoring; and f) beginning teachers are provided the opportunities for new teachers to visit demonstration classrooms.

Administrator Involvement in Induction and Mentoring

The support provided by administrators for both novice teachers and their mentors is indeed a key component of success for the beginning teacher. Some of the necessary elements provided by administrators are, from the viewpoint of the beginning teacher, simple. Beginners want their principals to communicate to them the expectations of a good teacher (Brock & Grady, 1998). They also want to know how they are stacking up against those expectations. Beginning teachers in Brock and Grady's study were in agreement on several issues related to administrator involvement in the first year, and their findings are supported by other writers (Bloom & Davis, 1997). First, beginners agree that the key role of the principal involves much more than assigning a mentor and providing beginning-of-school orientation. The need for personal involvement with the principal is rooted in the principal's role in a teacher's hiring and potential nonrenewal. The principal determines what is expected of a teacher, and teachers who wish a good evaluation need to understand the expectations of their evaluator. Without clear expectations from the chief administrator, the teacher may feel abandoned and frustrated.

When an administrator selects and assigns a mentor to a new teacher, that administrator should not then feel that the responsibility is ended. The mentor requires support from the administrator as well. Halford (1998) writes of the need for administrators to carefully consider the match between mentors and beginners, for the administrator to support professional development for mentors, and for administrators to allocate time for mentors to adequately support novices.

The Teacher Support Specialist Program

As previously stated, providing a formal mentoring program within a school district, with support from superintendents, central office personnel, and building administrators, is one aspect of developing and maintaining qualified teachers in the classroom. The purpose of one such mentor training program, known as the Teacher Support Specialist (TSS) Program, is to provide a process for preparing experienced teachers to provide support and guidance to preservice teachers, beginning teachers, interns, and colleagues in peer mentoring relationships. The development of the TSS program began at the state level with a collaborative effort involving the Georgia Department of Education, school districts, colleges, universities, and Regional Educational Service Agencies (RESAs). Currently, school districts, RESAs, and colleges and universities may adapt the state TSS program framework to develop a local TSS program; however, the Georgia Professional Standards Commission (PSC), the agency that oversees the program within the state, must approve the local program.

The TSS program framework consists of two fifty-hour training components, known as the Preparation and Internship Phases, which focus on the enhancement of teachers' skills in observing instruction (observation skills) and providing supportive feedback (conferencing skills) to the novice teacher. Teachers who successfully complete the program receive a Teacher Support Specialist endorsement on their teaching certificate issued by the Georgia PSC.

A local university, which has a TSS program based on the state framework, has offered TSS mentor training as graduate level courses to qualified teachers (those with at least three years of teaching experience) since 1995. The courses are taught during two subsequent semesters. The first course is delivered in a classroom setting on campus. The second course is a

supervised field-based internship in which participants mentor a protégé. Because supervision of TSS participants during the TSS internship phase has proven to be a time consuming process, in summer 2001 a collaborative training model for supervision was developed. With this model, qualified administrators or their designees receive training to serve as on-site intern supervisors for TSS interns during the TSS internship phase. Teams of two from a university cadre of trainers conduct on-site TSS intern supervision training for area school districts. Providing training using this model has been ongoing to support the supply and demand for trained intern supervisors in each school within participating school districts. In addition to TSS intern supervision training, a seminar for school administrators who have TSS interns and intern supervisors in their schools are invited to participate in a session held on campus or in the school district in which information about the TSS program is shared and issues related to onsite supervision of interns is discussed.

TSS Redelivery Model

Currently, the university's Teacher Support Program is under revision and includes a new training model, known as the TSS Redelivery Model, which may possibly provide mentor training for area teachers in a more timely and consistent manner. In addition, the TSS Redelivery Model may become an aspect of the mentor training component of a school district's current or future new teacher induction program. To initiate the process for implementing the model, a school district contracts with the university and identifies a district level coordinator who is responsible for coordinating efforts among schools within the school district and with the university.

In addition to TSS training for the certification endorsement provided on campus and TSS intern supervision training which are already in place, the components of the TSS Redelivery Model include the following: a) redelivery training, consisting of 15 contact hours, for mentor teachers who already have the TSS certification endorsement and who are selected by their school district to become instructors or "redeliver" TSS training to qualified teachers within their respective school districts; and b) training for building administrators to provide mentoring and support to new teachers and their mentors.

As part of the TSS Redelivery Model, university personnel organize and conduct TSS training for the certification endorsement, TSS redelivery training, and training for members of the university cadre who provide on-site intern supervision training. The coordinator for the university's TSS program, in collaboration with district level coordinators, oversees all TSS redelivery and intern supervision training activities within participating school districts. To disseminate information about the TSS Redelivery Model and to provide assistance in coordinating training efforts within area schools districts, the university works in collaboration with the three RESAs that serve the school districts included in the university's service area.

Future Steps

The TSS Redelivery Model is currently being piloted in two school districts in the university's service area with expectations that four other school districts will pilot the program within the 2003-2004 academic year. The process for piloting in one of the schools districts began with six teachers and one central office administrator, who serves as the district level coordinator, participating as a team in the TSS preparation phase on campus during summer 2002, participating in the TSS internship phase during fall 2002, and receiving the TSS

certification endorsement in January 2003. The seven participants are to complete the additional 15 hours of TSS redelivery training in April 2003 and as a team conduct the preparation phase of TSS training through redelivery for qualified teachers within their school district in summer 2003. The team will then conduct the internship phase of TSS training through redelivery for their school district during fall 2003 with expectations that the teachers who participate in TSS training through redelivery will receive the TSS certification endorsement in January 2004. As part of the pilot for the redelivery model for the school district, TSS intern supervision training was conducted in June 2002 by a team from the university's cadre of trainers who provided training to one assistant principal from each of the schools within the district.

In the second school district in which the TSS Redelivery Model is being piloted, plans include the participation of a team composed of a central office administrator, who serves as the district level coordinator, and 11 teachers who already have the TSS certification endorsement. Expectations are for team members to complete TSS redelivery training in early summer 2003 and conduct the preparation phase of TSS training through redelivery for qualified teachers within the district during the latter part of summer 2003. The internship phase of TSS training through redelivery will be conducted during fall 2003 with plans for the participants to receive the TSS certification endorsement in January 2004. Plans also include the provision of TSS intern supervision training, to be conducted in summer 2003, for one assistant principal from each school in the district.

To support the university's TSS program and TSS Redelivery Model, plans are being made to form an advisory board during summer 2003. The advisory board will consist of representatives from the university, in-service teachers who have received TSS training, novice

teachers in their first and second year of teaching in area public school districts, building administrators and central office personnel from area public school districts, and representatives from local RESAs. Advisory board meetings will be held periodically to discuss issues and concerns in regard to the program. The university's TSS program coordinator will facilitate meetings and board activities.

Future plans are also being developed to conduct a research study to determine the following: a) the extent of programs for induction and mentoring within the school districts in the university's service area; and b) the correlation between the perceptions of administrators, mentor teachers, and first, second, and third year teachers of the current induction and/or mentoring programs in their respective school districts. Because effective induction and mentoring programs are strongly related to teacher retention, the belief is that the study will lead to improved induction and mentoring programs and, therefore, greater retention of new teachers.

The number of ways to enter the teaching profession will continue to expand and a large number of highly qualified teachers are approaching retirement; therefore, effective induction and mentoring programs with well-trained mentors and supportive administrators are needed to ensure no teacher, and thus no child, will be left behind.

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